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Due to the Thanksgiving holiday next week, the November 26 issue of The Baptist Record may be delayed by one or more days in some areas.

SINCE 1877  
19, 2009  
VOL. 133  
No. 46

# Record

NOV 20 2009

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

## Hurricane victim finds hope at CWJC

By Julie Walters  
Correspondent

When Hurricane Katrina swept through New Orleans in August 2005, its path of destruction claimed Letitia Theodore's home and all her belongings — along with her hope.

After living in a shelter for three weeks, a family from Louisiana moved Theodore's family to Hattiesburg. "That's where Christian Women's Job Corps found me, totally beaten down," Theodore said.

Before being part of Christian Women's Job Corp (CWJC), Theodore said she was a "very sad person" whose "life had no meaning," but when God prompted her to respond to a newspaper ad about the ministry, that all changed.

CWJC was established in 1997 as a ministry of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Mississippi WMU partners with the national organization. The Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering provides support, but the CWJC sites are independently organized and raise their own operational funds.

"CWJC was a wonderful experience," Theodore said. "It was very scary at first because I had been out of school for so many years, but coming to the center made me feel better about myself and I could not wait to get there every day.

"My favorite part about CWJC was meeting new people, and growing together like a family," she continued. "It was such a bonding experience with other women who had similar experiences to mine. Until then, I thought I was the only one in bad circumstances. When we had problems, we all prayed about them and that helped me so much."

More importantly, her involvement in the ministry helped Theodore find her significance in Christ. "CWJC has opened many doors for me," she said. "The biggest thing is I have found myself. I have become a Christian and now know what that means; it is not just a word."

As a result, Theodore said she is a better person, a better mother to her six-year-old daughter, and has much higher self-esteem.

"Letitia was broken when she came to us but by no means out," said Linda Donnell, site coordinator of Pinebelt CWJC in Hattiesburg. "She was a sponge that seemed to want to soak up everything that she could. We watched her bloom as she went through the program and we have seen that process continue through the past three years. She truly is a ray of sunshine."

Theodore credits Donnell as a person of great influence on her life as she helped her realize that "life is not fair and you have to play the hand you are dealt." Also key to her transformation at CWJC were her Bible study teacher, Eleanor Gerrard, and her mentor, Rosie Riley.



**WINNER** — Letitia Theodore (third from left) displays her Sybil Bentley Dove Award from the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Foundation in Birmingham during the Acts 1:8 - Mission Night in Mississippi dinner held October 26 in conjunction with the 174th annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. The national award honors a current or former Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC) participant who seeks to advance herself through life skills, academic development, and faith in God. Congratulating Theodore were (from left) Rosie Riley, mentor; Linda Donnell, Pinebelt CWJC site coordinator in Hattiesburg; David George, WMU Foundation president; Janice Swiggum, chairman of the Pinebelt CWJC advisory council; and George Berger, missions director for Lebanon Association in Hattiesburg. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

"Rosie really pushed me and she is still doing that," said Theodore. "She is not just a mentor, but also a friend."

This year, Theodore is the recipient of the Sybil Bentley Dove Award, which honors a current or former CWJC participant who seeks to advance herself through life skills, academic development, and faith in God.

Established in 1998 by Faye Dove Wright in honor of her mother, the Dove Award from the WMU Foundation carries a \$1,000 grant.

"Christian Women's Job Corps and Christian Men's Job Corps (CMJC), CWJC's counterpart for men, exist because there are women and men who have the courage to face the challenges in their lives and the strength to overcome those challenges," said Jean Cullen, national WMU's ministry consultant responsible for the two ministries.

David George, president of the WMU Foundation in Birmingham, presented Theodore with the award in Jackson on October 26, during the Acts 1:8 - Mission Night in Mississippi dinner held in conjunction with the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Theodore has worked the past three years at Aldersgate Mission, a childcare center in Hattiesburg where she helps prepare children to go to college. She has her own classroom and works with up to 18 children through their college-bound program.

She has completed childcare certification classes and plans to further her edu-

cation and continue helping other people as she has been helped.

In retrospect, Theodore says her bad experiences have made her a stronger person. "I now put God first in everything I do and have the assurance that He is always with me," she shared. "I know I cannot make it without God; He has lifted me and brought me a very long way."

She is just one of thousands of women and men whose lives are changed each year through CWJC and CMJC. In 2008 alone, 4,351 participants found hope and direction at 215 CWJC and CMJC sites across the United States where ministry leaders and mentors served 217,489 volunteer hours.

Mississippi currently has 13 CWJC sites with one additional site in formation. Some of the sites also sponsor CMJC programs. In 2008, a total of 180 participants (students) utilized the sites, which were staffed by 918 volunteers who donated 15,816 hours.

For more information about CWJC and CMJC in Mississippi, contact Tammy Anderson, Mississippi WMU, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3323 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 323. E-mail: tanderson@mbcb.org. Web site: www.mbcb.org.

Walters is a communications specialist in the WMU national office in Birmingham. William H. Perkins Jr. contributed to this article.



## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



**William H. Perkins Jr.**  
Editor

EDITOR  
William H. Perkins Jr.  
wperkins@mbcb.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
Tony Martin  
tmartin@mbcb.org

LAYOUT/DESIGN  
Benjamin Ivey  
bivey@mbcb.org

ADVERTISING  
Emily Jones  
ejones@mbcb.org

CIRCULATION MANAGER  
Brenda Quattlebaum  
bquattlebaum@mbcb.org

EDITOR EMERITUS  
Don McGregor

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:  
Marcus Bowers, Brandon  
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Postmaster:  
Send changes of address to: The  
BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530,  
Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Send news, communication, and  
address changes to: The Editor,  
BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530,  
Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800  
Fax: (601) 292-3330  
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

VOLUME 133 • NUMBER 46  
(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$10.35 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.

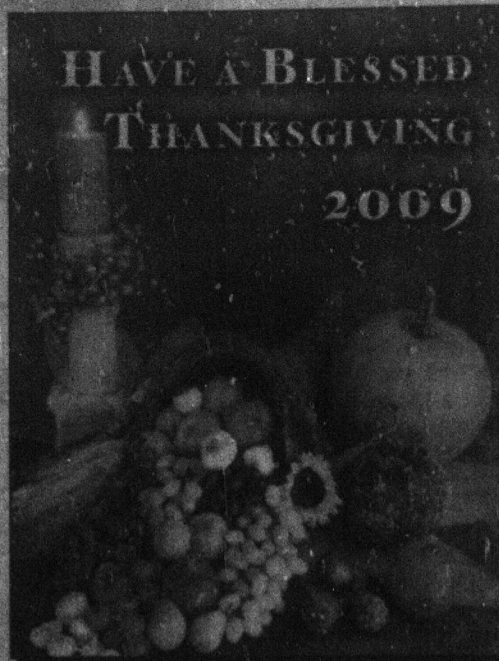
# Give thanks, and keep fighting for right

A lot of people were positively giddy last week over passage of the Stupak amendment to the health care reform bill that was approved by the U.S. House of Representatives and is on its way to the U.S. Senate. The Stupak amendment, you will recall, was introduced by Democrat Congressman Bart Stupak of Michigan to prohibit any provisions of the reform bill from funding abortions.

The celebration was premature. "The win on the Stupak amendment may not last long, however," The Baptist Record reported on the front page of the November 12 issue, "because of the possibility that the amendment could be negotiated out of the final bill by the conference committee that will meet to settle differences between the House version of the bill and any Senate version that may be approved in the coming days or months."

As it has turned out, that statement was prescient. Before the ink was dry on the paper, pro-abortion extremists and their toadies in the news media were warring against the Stupak amendment as an assault on women's "reproductive choice." Craven politicians predictably fell quickly into line, promising to eliminate the amendment along the process to final passage.

Columnist Cynthia Tucker of the Atlanta Constitution Journal (and an MSNBC analyst to boot) prefers to describe human life growing inside a mother's womb as "pre-babies," and "one-day-might-be-children." She is incensed that the Stupak amendment could prevent women from getting abor-



tions at any time during the nine months of human gestation, paid for either directly by taxpayers or through publicly-funded insurance coverage.

"They wanted to make sure that a woman can't easily purchase private insurance that covers abortions... even with her own money," she wrote in her November 17 column in The Clarion Ledger newspaper.

Ellen Goodman, columnist for The Boston Globe and a pro-abortion extremist if there ever was one, is also up in arms over the Stupak amendment. "It's now abortion rights supporters being told they must make further concessions or lose health care reform altogether," she wrote in her November 15 column in The Clarion Ledger.

"If pro-choice Democrats turn back reproductive rights, it proves they can be rolled by intransigent opposition. And once rolled, it's all downhill," she ominously warned.

Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider and the recipient of more than \$300 million in taxpayer-funded subsidies, criticized the amendment and issued a statement calling on pro-abortion supporters to use "our strongest weapon: The White House."

U.S. President Barack Obama, a strong abortion supporter, said, "We're not looking to change what is a core principle that has been in place for a long time, which is federal dollars are not used to subsidize abortions."

That sounds like the President supports the Stupak amendment, but hold on.

"Given President Obama's record and his promises to the abortion lobby, it is a safe assumption that he will support abortion-friendly language under the guise of 'compromise,'" said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the pro-life Susan B. Anthony List.

The fight against legalized infanticide as part of health care reform is far from over, as evidenced by the pro-abortionists' statements. We must be vigilant as the bill works its way through the tangled and confusing legislative process. We must keep ourselves and each other informed and involved. We must keep our politicians honest and make sure they know the consequences of expanding abortion rights under health care reform.

There's a lot at stake, and we can't let down our guard. Every drop of innocent blood shed through abortion is a grievance to God. Mississippi Baptists have to stand for what's right. When it comes to human life, there is no other "choice."

The memory is clear in my mind. I was looking at the Berlin Wall. It was a cold January night in 1977. Snow was everywhere, but the wall dominated the foreground of the landscape. Buildings behind the wall were dark with their windows bricked up and sealed. Spotlights lit up every square inch of open ground and guard towers were spaced strategically along the perimeter with at least three guards stationed in each one.

The number three was important because when guards were placed in trios and not paired, the possibilities of a bond being created between the three that would lead to defection were greatly lessened than when there were only two guards. It was an issue of calculated cynicism that marked all that the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (East Germany) did. For the first time in known history, a wall had actually been constructed designed to hold an entire nation captive.

My one dominating thought was, "Every American, in fact, every freedom-loving person, ought to see this sight. If they did, they would understand what a great gift, privilege and responsibility freedom is!" No one could be unmoved by this

## GUEST OPINION:



### The meaning of true freedom

By R. Philip Roberts, president  
Midwestern Seminary  
Kansas City, Mo.

experience, and no one could leave untouched by the horrors of communism and totalitarianism. As a reminder of the event, I found a spot on the western side where I could pull out a small piece of concrete and a fallen piece of rusted barbed wire as a reminder of a life-changing experience.

Twelve years later as a pastor in Brussels, I traveled across East Germany in October 1989. I could sense the change in atmosphere from previous journeys there. Security at the border crossing was much more relaxed. The guards were less hostile and insulting as there seemed to be a sense of lessened tension all along our journey.

A few weeks later the incredible news broke on television that the Berlin Wall had been opened. In the ensuing years,

many improvements have come to much of Central and Eastern Europe, though not everyone, by any means, has gotten in on as much prosperity as they might have first hoped. Some "modified" forms of totalitarianism emerged in various countries and "Putinism" seems to dominate Russia's present and future.

The "fall of the Wall" remains, however, a most significant event as it signaled the end of the Cold War and the triumph of a sort for a freer Europe — but Europe remains in crisis. It is a crisis as real and serious as the one it faced when the Red Army was squared off against the forces of NATO at the Fulda Gap.

This crisis, however, is a moral and spiritual one. Much of Europe languishes with empty churches (now often

museums), hostile attitudes toward Christian values, vapid hearts and souls of a growing non-Christian populace, and confusion about how to respond to the growth of Islam in its major cities.

There is an oppression of soul and spirit among many Europeans that must be lifted for true freedom — spiritual freedom — to be obtained.

The good news of the Christian message is that another wall has fallen. It is the wall of separation between a righteous and holy God and a fallen and sinful people. It is the wall that the Apostle Paul wrote of in Ephesians 2:14, "He is our peace, who made both groups [Jew and Gentile] one and tore down the dividing 'wall' of hostility." Similarly, it is the barrier that "your iniquities have built... between you and your God," according to the prophet Isaiah (cf. 59:2). It is the wall that Christ alone can remove by His shed blood on the cross when people put their faith in Him.

Through this God-provided liberation, the hollowness of life without God is filled and individuals are made His children. Europeans will never know what true freedom is until they know the freedom that comes through Jesus Christ.

# 'Fireproof' makers announce next project

ALBANY, Ga. (BP and local reports) — Sherwood Church in Albany, Ga., the movie-making Southern Baptist church that filmed the movies *Fireproof* and *Facing the Giants*, announced a new release during their November 15 evening worship service.

The new movie will be titled, *Courageous*, and will deal with fatherhood issues that the church hopes will convict men to rise up and be spiritual leaders of their children and families.

Alex and Stephen Kendrick, associate pastors at Sherwood Church, said the script — which the two brothers have not finished — will focus on the lives of four policemen and their struggle to be better fathers. Not all of them succeed.

It will be the fourth movie from the church, which saw its last two films, *Facing the Giants* (2006) and *Fireproof* (2008), surprise movie observers and gross \$10 million and \$33.5 million, respectively, despite relatively small budgets by Hollywood's standards.

*Fireproof* was the top grossing independent film last year. The church gets a small slice of the revenue and puts it toward various ministries.

The target date for filming *Courageous* is spring 2010, with release likely in early 2011. A budget has not been set, although it probably will be more than it was for *Fireproof*, which cost \$500,000 to make.

The movie is being filmed at a time when 36% of all children live without their biological fathers and 40% of all births take place outside of marriage.

The announcement — attended by a large contingent of Christian and secular media — would have gone largely unno-

ticed if not for the success of its recent films, particularly *Fireproof*, which spawned a New York Times best-selling book, *The Love Dare*, and also launched a marriage movement.

The church is praying that *Courageous* sparks a fatherhood movement. "The media often portray fathers as weak, selfish, often immoral," Alex Kendrick told church members, "but we know the healthier home is when a father is engaged and involved with a purpose... It is our desire that when men walk out of the theater, they will ask themselves what kind of man they are and, if they are a father, what kind of father they are."

He added to a standing ovation, "Is this [movie] likely to be controversial? You bet, but are we going to back down from what the Lord has told us to do? No way."

Controversy cannot be avoided in a movie that tells men they should be the spiritual leaders of their families, Alex Kendrick told Baptist Press. "We want to say, 'Fathers, it is your job to nurture and to lead your children in the admonition of the Lord.'"

"The steering wheel of your family is supposed to be in your hands, not your wife's, not anybody else's. This is your job. Your job is to serve and protect and to teach about the Lord."

The movie concept has already had an impact. Stephen Kendrick's marriage, he said in writing the script he became convicted so much that he started leading his family in evening discipleship, reading the Bible to his wife and four kids, and leading in discussion. The effect on his children, he said, has been incredible.

"My heart's desire is if we can call men to spiritual lead-



**BIG ANNOUNCEMENT** — A new movie from the makers of the Christian movies *Facing the Giants* and *Fireproof* was announced November 15 that their next motion picture is in pre-production and will be titled, *Courageous*. On hand for the announcement during the evening worship service at Sherwood Church in Albany Georgia, were (from left) senior pastor Michael Catt, associate pastor Stephen Kendrick, executive pastor Jim McBride, and associate pastor Alex Kendrick. (Photo courtesy of Hayley Catt)

ership in their homes and to be praying over their kids and their families and to be feeding them the Word... there's no telling what God will do," Stephen Kendrick said during the Baptist Press interview.

The movie will spotlight one of the officers and how he is led to be a better father following a tragic event in his family. At one point the policeman tells his friends, "I do not want to be a good enough dad. I want to be a good dad honorable to God."

He searches the Bible and writes out a "code" for what kind of father he wants to be, and he asks his three police buddies to hold him accountable. All of them are inspired by watching the change in his life, but not all of them end up being godly fathers.

*Courageous* gets much of its inspiration from the Old Testament prophet Joshua and his declaration in Joshua 24:15, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," the Kendrick brothers said.

The movie gets its title from God's urging of Joshua to be "strong and courageous," they added.

The movie's theme and title were decided after a year of prayer by the Kendricks, senior pastor Michael Catt — a Mississippi native — and executive pastor Jim McBride.

Even before the church shot its first film, Catt said, it was decided that the four of them must be in agreement over every major decision. "We don't do any of this with a three-to-one vote. We have to be in harmony and unity because we believe that God blesses unity."

*Courageous* will not be a "Fireproof Part 2," Alex Kendrick said. "Fireproof was centrally focused on marriage. This one is not. It will have aspects of marriage but this one is centrally focused on men living with integrity, especially in light of their role as fathers."

"We're going after the hearts of men with this movie and calling them to take God at his Word."

The film's script, McBride said, "will dictate the budget," which they hope to know in about two months.

For more information, visit [www.courageousthemovie.com](http://www.courageousthemovie.com).

## Looking back

### 10 years ago

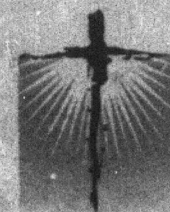
First Church, Gulfport, takes a creative approach to meeting their Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal by giving each participating family \$10 to invest, and then bring back the original \$10 plus any earnings back to the church.

### 20 years ago

Mississippi ACTS affiliates receive five first place awards during the fourth annual ACTS awards presentation at the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission in Fort Worth. Four different Mississippi ACTS affiliates took home the first place honors.

### 30 years ago

Chester L. Quarles, executive secretary-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, is honored on his 10-year anniversary during the annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention in Jackson.



MISSISSIPPI  
BAPTISTS

## THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

NOVEMBER 19, 2009

VOL. 133

No. 46



YOU CAN RESPOND  
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

## Resolution panned

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) has joined more than 100 other organizations in a statement opposing "defamation of religions" resolutions being promoted in the United Nations. The defamation of religions movement, which is led in the United Nations by the 56-member Organization of the Islamic Conference, urges the condemnation of messages that defame religions and can lead to violence. Such a measure approved by a U.N. body earlier this year cited only Islam as a specific target and urged countries to protect "against acts of hatred, discrimination, intimidation and coercion resulting from defamation of religions and incitement to religious hatred in general." The ERLC and others say the defamation of religions concept is "incompatible with the fundamental freedoms of individuals to freely exercise and peacefully exercise their thoughts, ideas and beliefs." Such resolutions, the statement says, "punish the peaceful criticism of ideas" and do not protect the rights of individuals as affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one of the U.N.'s founding documents. Defamation of religions resolutions undergird laws in some countries that prohibit blasphemy and are used to oppress religious or political beliefs that are out of favor with the government, according to the statement. The document makes no direct reference to Islam, though some Muslim-dominated states enforce anti-blasphemy laws. The U.N. General Assembly is expected to consider a defamation of religions resolution in December, CNSNews.com reported. The new document, A Common Statement From Civil Society on the Concept of the Defamation of Religions, may be accessed online at [www.whatisdefamationofreligion.com](http://www.whatisdefamationofreligion.com).

# BIBLIOCIPHER

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PFQMLA.

BTWL ARH: SKFNI-SKTF

Clue: N = T

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Matthew Twenty-Two; Thirty-Two

## THINKING ABOUT THANKING

Thanksgiving is a wonderful day. It is a wonderful season and of all of our holidays through the year it well may be the calmest, sweetest, most joyous, and less hectic of all. It is unlike Christmas where there is such a sense of responsibility, if not an obligation, to make sure that you give the family and meaningful people in your life a gift. Thanksgiving only requires a little bit of thought, work, and money to put a delicious meal on the table together with family and/or friends and enjoy the moment. Actually, Thanksgiving Day in America has its historical roots in both the early days of our settlers and beyond that, the official declaration by our government that we should stop and give thanks.

While some may not know to whom they should give thanks, the absolute truth is that "Every good and perfect gift comes from above" (James 1:17). God has blessed America, and even in the most difficult of economic times, God has still blessed most of us far beyond anything that we deserve or can imagine. Personally, I think that it is a wonderful thing that here in America we have a day set aside to stop and give thanks.

**Thanking requires thinking.** In fact, the English word for thanks grew out of the word to think. It is impossible to be a gracious person filled with thanksgiving without thinking. Sometimes we never give a thought from whence the blessings come in our lives. As a result, we do not thank and that is a tragedy.

Years ago, a fellow was looking for a job. A man invited him to come and work on his farm.



## Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

The fellow was desperate for a job and so he hired on, got there, and found this was a Christian family and folks like he had never been around before. He had a place to sleep and, early the next morning when breakfast was ready, he was invited to come and eat. There were eggs, biscuits, sausage, bacon, and grits. Before they partook of the bounty on the table, this family and their children paused to give God thanks. The fellow had never been around folks that did that, and he was impressed and blessed. After the good meal, they headed out to work in the field. At noon, some lunch had been brought out to them, and all of the family and workers gathered up and before they dove in to eat, they paused again to give thanks to a God who would be so gracious as to provide everything for them. They ate and then it was back to work.

With the going down of the sun, they returned to the farmhouse only to have a delicious supper prepared for them. They gathered around the table, and one more time they paused to give thanks. The fellow had just never seen such and, after the meal sitting around and visiting with some of the family, the son of the farmer was talking to the man and the hired hand felt comfortable enough to ask the boy about them praying all the time before the meals. The boy said to him, "Every time we stop and eat anything we give thanks to God for it. Do everybody and every-

thing on this farm do that?" the fellow asked. With childlike innocence the boy replied, "No sir, the hogs don't!" Maybe he summed it up pretty well, and even until this day, if we do not stop to think, we might not thank. If we are driven by just our insatiable appetites, we might not have the time or inclination to pause and to give thanks to God.

There is a pretty amazing verse in Isaiah 1:3 where God says through Isaiah, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Is that an amazing verse or what? Some of us may not be as smart as a donkey or at least, we may not think as clearly and succinctly as we ought to like an ox. Do we recognize the good touch from the hand of a Master that would provide so much and bless us so greatly? It is Thanksgiving, so stop and just for your own thinking process, fill in these blanks:

## REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

- Richburg Church, Hattiesburg:** Revival, Nov. 29 - Dec. 2; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Lyndon Longoria, speaker; Stevie Dewease and Answered Prayer; Paul A. Roney, pastor.
- Fairview Church, Indianola:** 136th homecoming anniversary, Nov. 22, 10 a.m., followed by lunch; Tom McLaughlin, speaker.

"God I thank you for giving me \_\_\_\_\_ (a genuine friend who has meant so much to you). I also want to thank you for giving me \_\_\_\_\_ (a family member who has meant more than you have ever let them know). While I am so thankful that my family is not hungry, I am grateful to you for \_\_\_\_\_ (your favorite food that will be on the Thanksgiving table). God, I especially want to thank you for \_\_\_\_\_ (a person in your church whose life and influence has been very meaningful to you). I thank you for \_\_\_\_\_ (a pastor or staff member who has been significant in your walk with the Lord and your development as a Christian). Dear God, as we enjoy Thanksgiving without the sounds of the war right around us, I thank you for \_\_\_\_\_ (a person you know who is serving in harm's way). Most of all I want to pause and thank you for Jesus, a Savior who would give His life to pay for my sin debt and rise from the dead to give me everlasting and abundant life."

The author can be contacted at [jfutral@mbcb.org](mailto:jfutral@mbcb.org).

## Mississippi Baptist Minister Hosts

# Hawaii

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For brochure, information, reservations,  
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# Practical Principles for Christian Living



A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION • VOLUME 11 • ISSUE 11

## Little Boy Blue, Come Blow Your Horn . . .

By Rob Chambers

Miss. Baptist Christian Action Commission

Most of us have heard of the nursery rhyme, Little Boy Blue, and you may have even had it read to you at some time or another. It reads:

*Little Boy Blue, Come blow your horn,  
The sheep's in the meadow, The cow's in the corn;  
Where is that boy, Who looks after the sheep?  
Under the haystack, Fast asleep. Will you wake him? Oh no, not I,  
For if I do, He will surely cry.*

It's obvious that Little Boy Blue has a responsibility — to serve as a watchman over the sheep and cattle. If cause for alarm arose, then it was Little Boy Blue's responsibility to sound the horn, alert the people, and rally them toward action.

So, the sheep's out of the fold, and the cow's in the corn patch — a cause for alarm, but where is he? He's asleep.

If the Boy were awakened and called to step-up and fulfill his responsibility, then he would resist and rebel against his duty as the rhyme alludes.

Many Christians, pastors, and churches are like Little Boy Blue.

All three have a responsibility to take watch, to sound the alarm, and to take the necessary action to fulfill God's



Chambers

their responsibility or at least turn a blind eye to it. If someone calls attention to their responsibility, they cry and say, "I can't do anything about it! So, why bother me? It's not my problem. Let somebody else deal with it. Let me sleep!"

Many believers remain asleep and avoid addressing problems that are a cause for alarm. Communities are rife with people given to the sin of drugs, drunkenness, sexual immorality, domestic violence, abortion, etc. They prefer to stay 'asleep,' but the Bible says, "wake up O sleeper and expose the fruitless deeds of darkness" (Ephesians 5:8-14).

commands — to share the Gospel, to make disciples, to love justice, to care for widows and orphans, to be salt and light, etc.

But many believers act and react in much the same way as Little Boy Blue. They prefer to be either ignorant or

Not only do they refuse to speak against the darkness of sin, they also refuse to evangelize people bound to such sin and/or those affected by these sins. They conclude that since it's not happening to them, their family, or their town, then don't ask them to take responsibility.

But when a believer exposes such fruitless deeds of darkness, they often get maligned by those fast asleep in the church. They temporarily awaken from their slumber in time to cry out, "Who are you to speak out against what is wrong? That's between them and God. The church doesn't need to get 'involved' in that."

Jeremiah faced this type of opposition as he called Judah to repent from her idolatrous ways, but the Lord told Jeremiah, "Now behold, I have made you today as a fortified city, and as a pillar of iron and as a wall of bronze against the whole land, to the kings of Judah, to its princes, to its priests and to the people of the land. And they will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you" (Jeremiah 1:18, 19).

In a culture that increasingly calls evil good and good evil (Isaiah 5:20),

Christians will be ridiculed for taking a stand for what is morally right, but Jesus said, "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me" (Matthew 5:10, 11).

When we stand for Christ, even when we do so with gentleness and reverence, as we should, Peter tells us "do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled" because "those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed" (1 Peter 3:14-16).

With the power of the Holy Spirit let us be instruments of God to preserve and redeem a dead, dying, and decaying society — regardless of the cost.

As Richard Land has said, through Him may it be said that your home, your church, your workplace, your school, and your town be a place where "it is easier to do and say and think the right thing, and where it is more difficult to do and say and think the wrong thing."

The author can be contacted at [rchambers@christianaction.com](mailto:rchambers@christianaction.com).

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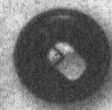
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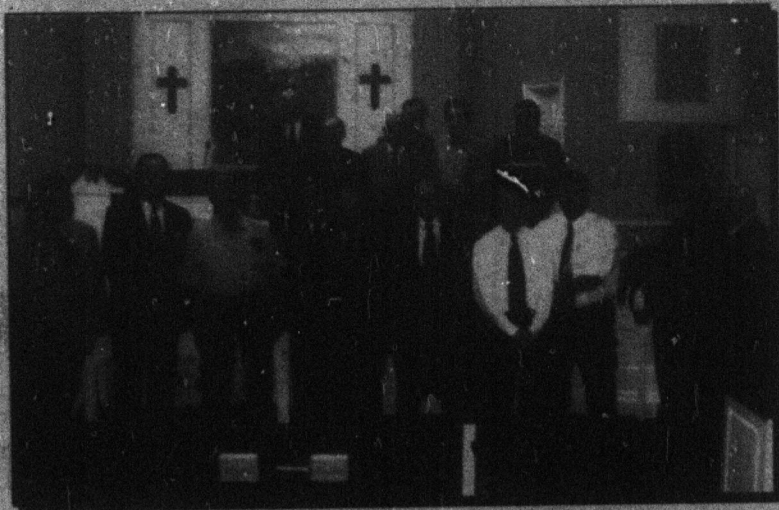
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## JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Main Street Church, Mendenhall



2. Goodwater Church, Magee



3. Pleasant Hill Church, Olive Branch



4. Antioch Church, Union



1. Main Street Church, Mendenhall, recently held a deacon ordination service. Shown are the participants.

2. The Girls in Action of Goodwater Church, Magee, recently sold handmade gift tags, raising over \$400 to go toward the Margaret Lackey State Missions offering. Shown are the participants.

3. The GAs of Pleasant Hill Church, Olive Branch, collected \$133 for Christmas in August to be used by missionaries for gift cards and supplies needed in their ministry. Shown, clockwise, are Ruth O'Neal, Pam Busby, Lexie Hensley, Elizabeth Busby, Savannah Green and Donna Gilliam.

4. Antioch Church, Union, recognizes its Bible drillers. Shown are the participants.

5. Blythe Creek Church, Choctaw Association, recently held a baby dedication service. Shown is pastor Mike Fondren presenting a Bible and certificate to Brandi Fiebig, Mary Grace Fiebig, Joey Fiebig, and baby Aaron Joseph.

6. Branch Church, Morton, held a deacon ordination service in September for Chad Ragan. Shown are Ragan, Tonya Ragan, and children Tyler, Hunter, and Skyler. Pastor Timothy Phillipson is presenting the certificate.

7. Rocky Point Church, Carthage, ordained Boyd Jenkins and Jason Kuntz as deacons. Shown are Lisa Jenkins, Jenkins, Kuntz, Shannon Kuntz, and pastor Marshall Lum.

8. Woodland Hills Church, Jackson, ordained Stuart Purvis to the gospel ministry Oct. 25. Shown are pastors Steve Purvis, Tyler Pigott, and Purvis. Purvis has been called to Spring Creek Church, Philadelphia.

9. Cedar View Church, Olive Branch, is hosting a community singing Nov. 21, 6 p.m., featuring The Peppers, The Son Rays, and the Cedar View Singers. The singing will be preceded by a dinner, 5 p.m.



5. Blythe Creek Church, Choctaw Association



6. Branch Church, Morton



7. Rocky Point Church, Carthage

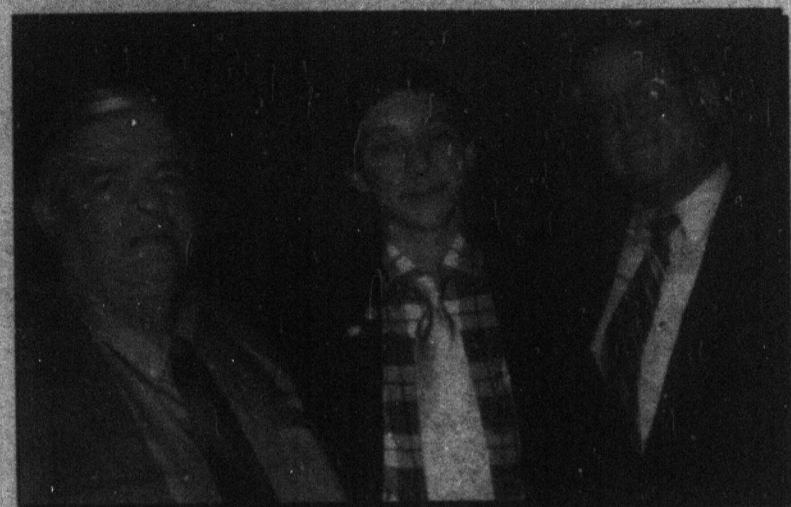


8. Woodland Hills Church, Jackson

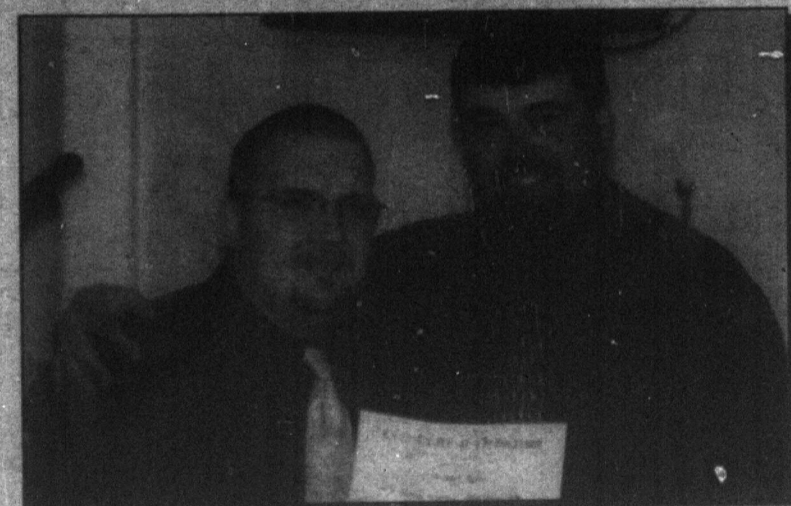
## JUST FOR THE RECORD



10. Rolling Creek Church, Quitman



11. Immanuel Church, Pontotoc



12. Lighthouse Church, New Albany



13. Moselle Memorial Church, Jones Association

10. Rolling Creek Church, Quitman, recognized Lamar and Ann Callahan Sept. 20 for 47 years of church music ministry and volunteer mission work during a service and reception. Shown are the Callahans.

11. Immanuel Church, Pontotoc, ordained Joey Johnson to the ministry Oct. 25. Shown, from left, are pastor Melvin Crawley, Johnson, and AMD George Steward.

12. Lighthouse Church, New Albany, ordained Anthony Adams to the gospel ministry Oct. 4. Shown are Adams and pastor Joe Gullick.

13. Blake Brown, minister to students and education, Moselle Memorial Church, Jones Association, was ordained to the ministry Nov. 8. Shown are Gerald Anderson, Cindy Brown, Brown, and pastor Keith M. Thompson.

14. Yalobusha Association adopted a resolution during their 89th session honoring James W. Gray for his service in several areas, including his work with World Changers and disaster relief. The 2009 annual of the Yalobusha Association is dedicated in his honor.

15. Center Hill Church, Olive Branch, recognized their veterans Nov. 8. Shown are Charlie James, John Spencer Sr., and Jimmy Worley.

16. Harmony Church, Quitman, ordained Ronnie Dedwylder and Doug Griffin as deacons Oct. 4. Shown are Molly Dedwylder, Dedwylder, pastor Norman Robinson, Griffin, and Phyllis Griffin.

17. Yellow Leaf Church, Oxford, licensed Heath Conner to the gospel ministry. He is currently a sophomore at William Carey University. Shown are Wesley Hughes, Conner, and pastor Jerry East.

18. Holly Springs Church, Foxworth, is having their hanging of the green Nov. 29, 10 a.m.

19. New Hope Church, Foxworth, will host the Providentials Quartet in concert Dec. 6, 6:30 p.m. A love offering will be taken.



14. Gray



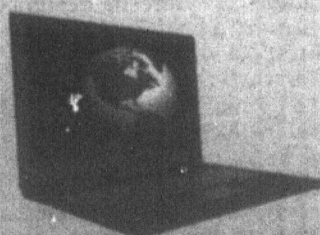
15. Center Hill Church, Olive Branch



16. Harmony Church, Quitman



17. Yellow Leaf Church, Oxford



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# Same sex marriage supporters not giving up campaign

ALBANY, N.Y. (BP and local reports) — Having faced stinging losses on Election Day, supporters of same sex marriage in New York and New Jersey are looking to regain momentum and are racing to legalize such relationships by year's end.

The clock is ticking. In New York, Democratic Gov. David Paterson is pressuring the Democratic-controlled Senate to send him a bill by year's end, before the calendar hits 2010 and legislators become less prone to pass a controversial bill in an election year.

In New Jersey, which just held an election for statewide offices, supporters of same sex marriage are rushing to send defeated Democratic Gov. Jon Corzine a bill before he leaves office Jan. 19.

Corzine says he would sign such a bill, while governor-elect Chris Christie, a Republican, has promised to veto it.

A win for homosexual activists in either state would be huge. Thus far, same sex marriage legalization has been limited to relatively small states. Four of the five states where it is recognized are ranked 29th or lower in population.

The largest, Massachusetts, ranks 14th. New Jersey ranks 11th and New York ranks third.

Unlike some other states, New Jersey and New York don't allow citizen-driven initiatives, so if a law is passed, it likely will stand.

Yet the political winds are blowing against same sex marriage backers. In Maine, a liberal state known for its libertarianism, voters recently passed an initiative banning same sex marriage while New Jersey, another left-leaning state, elected Christie, a conservative.

Paterson called New York's legislature into a special session on Nov. 10 to address not only same sex marriage but also the state's deficit. The Senate, though, adjourned without debating the marriage bill, which passed the Assembly in May. Another special session was scheduled for November 16-17, after this issue of The Baptist Record was printed. Democratic leaders and Paterson did reach an agreement, though, whereby the Senate will give the bill a vote by year's end.

As it stands now, bill supporters are several votes short. "We have to be ready every day the Senate is in session to think that this could be the day it could receive a vote," Jason J. McGuire, executive director of the Christian conservative group New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms, told Baptist Press.

McGuire's group opposes the bill and has been urging citizens to call their senators. He said the election results have made an impact on the bill's prospects. "Maine, a state that's blue and really quite liberal, even there the people vetoed the legislation and said, 'No, marriage is between a man and a woman.' That was significant," McGuire said, adding he believes New York is more conservative than Maine.

Homosexual groups like Empire State Pride Agenda believe they are entitled a vote on the bill because they helped Democrats win back the majority in the Senate in 2006. They also want a vote even if the bill loses, simply to put senators on record.

Democrats hold a 32-30 edge there, but not all Democrats are on board. At least five Democrats publicly have stat-

ed their opposition with one of them, Sen. Ruben Diaz Sr., a Pentecostal minister, leading the opposition.

"The people of the nation don't want gay marriage," Diaz told The New York Times. "They didn't want it in California; they didn't want it in Maine, and the people of upstate New York, after what happened to the candidate in the 23rd Congressional District, they sent a message they don't want gay marriage. Forget about it. People don't want it."

The bill is believed to have at least 25 or 26 votes. With Democratic defections, some Republican voters are needed but McGuire said GOP senators are worried that what happened to Scozzafava could happen to them.

"There are a number of senators that are in conservative-leaning districts that would be committing political suicide if they were to vote for this legislation," McGuire said. "There are a lot of senators here who are saying they don't want to come under the 'Dede effect.'"

The National Organization for Marriage says it will build a \$500,000 "war chest" to fund primary challenges to any GOP senator who votes for the bill.

The New Jersey bill is being pushed by Garden State Equality, which has launched TV ads and is asking its constituents to spend three minutes each day calling legislators on the issue. Democrats control the Assembly by a 47-33 margin and the Senate by a 23-17 edge. A bill has yet to pass either chamber.

Steven Goldstein, the chairman of Garden State Equality, gathered supporters the night after the election and told them, "We have about two and a half

months to win marriage equality. It's not over," the Montclair News reported.

Goldstein is pushing for a lame duck session to send Corzine the bill. New Jersey already recognizes civil unions, which grant same-sex couples all the legal benefits of marriage minus the name.

By contrast, Len Deo, president of the Christian conservative New Jersey Family Policy Council, is telling citizens to contact their state senators and oppose the bill. He is targeting eight specific senators who are leaning toward supporting the bill or are undecided.

"I think in the Assembly it may not be as close as we would hope," Deo told Baptist Press. "I think it's going to be very close in the Senate."

The National Organization for Marriage says it will work with like-minded groups and legislators in New Jersey and New York. Maggie Gallagher, president of the organization, told Baptist Press same sex marriage likely has a better chance for passage in New Jersey than in New York.

"In New Jersey it's a very serious problem," Gallagher said. "It's a serious problem in spite of the fact that the people of New Jersey just defeated a pro-gay marriage governor, so we're going to be working hard to see if we can persuade the legislators in New Jersey that they shouldn't be imposing gay marriage against the will of the people."

For more information about the National Organization for Marriage ([www.nationformarriage.org](http://www.nationformarriage.org)), New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms ([www.nycf.info](http://www.nycf.info)) or the New Jersey Family Policy Council ([www.njffc.org](http://www.njffc.org)), visit their websites.

## ENDA legislation could hamper church hiring, firing practices

WASHINGTON (BP) — Some religious organizations will be prevented from acting on their beliefs in making employment decisions regarding homosexuals, bisexuals, and transgender people if the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) is passed, a U.S. Senate committee has been told.

"ENDA, in its present form, would impose a substantial or unconstitutional burden on religious organizations and would interfere in their effectiveness in terms of pursuing their vision," lawyer Craig Parshall said in testifying against the bill in a hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

The legislation would make discrimination based on "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" illegal in such areas as hiring, firing, and compensation for both the private and public workplace. The measure would treat sexual orientation and gender identity in a fashion similar to other federally protected categories, such as race, gender, age, and religion.

Sexual orientation includes homosexuality and bisexuality, while gender identity, or transgendered status, takes in transsexuals and cross-dressers.

The bill provides exemptions for religious organizations, the military, and businesses with fewer than 15 employees, but Parshall said the exemption for religious organizations is insufficient for those motivated by a biblical conviction that homosexuality is sinful.

"It really provides no meaningful protection for the vast number of Christian ministries out there, both non-profit and particularly for-profit Christian ministries, bookstores, Christian publishers and so forth. In an area like this, clarity is necessary," Parshall told Baptist Press after the hearing.

For instance, if a Christian bookstore decides not to hire a homosexual, the courts can rule that the decision was made not because of the applicant's religion but because of his sexual orientation, said Parshall, senior vice president and general counsel of the National Religious Broadcasters.

"I'm fairly confident that after many, many years, if this has passed, we will finally get the courts to recognize it's unconstitutional, but between now and then, a great deal of damage is going to be done in ministries," he told BP.

Camille Olson, another witness, said ENDA should be eas-

ier to understand. If ENDA is clarified, "there would be less ambiguity, less confusion and more likelihood that individuals would understand how to comply with ENDA," said Olson, a lawyer at a Chicago firm.

In the meantime, while the bill is in the process of being reviewed, homosexual individuals are in need of protection in the workforce, some witnesses and senators said. Secular businesses, such as Nike Inc., will thrive if the bill passes, the committee was told.

"Nike's support of this bill is a reflection of our employment policies, practices and training programs... [T]hese are designed to reinforce a culture of inclusion and respect where each employee can reach their full potential," said Virginia Nguyen, a diversity and inclusion team member at Nike, at the hearing.


The committee's chairman, Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, said at the hearing the "harsh reality is that employers in most states in this country can still fire, refuse to

hire, or otherwise discriminate against individuals because of their sexual orientation or gender identification; shockingly, they can do so within the law."

Thomas Perez, assistant attorney general at the Department of Justice, said President Obama supports the bill. "The Obama adminis-

tration believes that ENDA must be the next step and that this act will be a worthy addition to its venerable predecessors," Perez said.

The Senate version of ENDA is S. 1584, while the House bill is H.R. 3017. The Senate bill has 43 cosponsors; the House measure has 189.



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# Mob prosecutions slow in 2008 India violence cases

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A year after anti-Christian mayhem claimed at least 100 lives in India's Orissa state, only 24 people have been convicted while the number of acquittals has risen to 95, according to the nonprofit Peoples Initiative for Justice and Peace.

Although 11,000 people were named as attackers in 2,500 complaints filed with police, only 827 complaints were registered by authorities and fewer than 700 people were arrested, the organization reported.

The lack of help has compounded feelings of helplessness and frustration among surviving Christians, John Dayal, secretary general of the All India Christian Council, told Compass Direct News. Calling the trials to date "a travesty of justice," Dayal said, "The manner of the judicial processes in the [Orissa district's] Kandhamal fast-track courts is tragic where all too many people have managed to escape conviction for crimes

as serious as conspiracy for brutal, premeditated murder and deliberate arson."

Among those acquitted was Manoj Pradhan, who allegedly led mobs that killed Christians and burned their houses a few months before he became a state legislator from the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, Compass reported. Facing charges in five cases of murder and six of arson, Pradhan has been acquitted in three cases.

More than 4,500 houses, 450 churches, and 13 educational institutions were burned in the violence, which occurred in August and September 2008. An estimated 50,000 people, mostly Christians, were left homeless by the turmoil.

On Sept. 23, a court delivered the first life sentences on murder charges stemming from the 2008 violence. Five people were given life terms for their involvement in the killing of Akbar Digal, a Baptist pastor who was killed Aug. 26, 2008, after refusing demands to forsake Christianity

and convert to Hinduism. His body reportedly was cut to pieces and burned.

Meanwhile, a Christian blogger who has been imprisoned in Egypt without charges for more than a year has threatened to go on a hunger strike unless his next application for release is granted.

Hani Nazeer, a 28-year-old high school social worker from Qena, Egypt, was denied release Nov. 9 without explanation by Egypt's interior ministry, Nazeer's attorneys told Compass Direct News. Nazeer was arrested Oct. 3, 2008, after a group of teenagers visited his Karz El Hob blog and read an online novel, Azazel's Goat in Mecca, written under the pseudonym Father Utah as a response to the Yusuf Zidane novel Azazel, which is critical of Christianity.

Police have never publicly produced any evidence linking Nazeer to Utah's work, his attorneys said. After Nazeer was arrested, posts reportedly continued on Utah's website.

Nazeer's situation is complicated by the fact that his writings upset both Islamic authorities and the hierarchy of the Coptic Orthodox Church, his attorneys told Compass Direct. He has criticized both the increasing Islamization of Egyptian society and the political involvement of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

An emergency law, enacted after the 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat, allows authorities to hold people without charge and effectively ignore court orders for their release simply by re-arresting them. One human rights group estimates 14,000 people are imprisoned under the law.



## COLLEGE NEWS

1. William Carey University faculty Phyllis Armstrong, instructor in education, received the highest honor for a classroom teacher by being recognized by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. Armstrong's performance as a teacher met the standard for renewal of her National Board Certification.

2. Chair of the department and interim dean of education Barry Morris has been appointed Dean of the School of Education at William Carey University. Before coming to Carey in 2004, Morris was on the faculty of the University of South Florida, his alma mater for his Ph.D. degree.

3. The William Carey University Winters School of Music will present the 2009 Madrigal Christmas Dinner, December 10 through 12 at 7 p.m. in Smith Auditorium on the Hattiesburg campus. Pre-dinner entertainment includes Renaissance music performed in the

Lucile Parker Gallery. The meal is followed by a rousing show that features members of the Carey Chorale in period costume singing, acting, and dancing, accompanied by a recorder concert that includes strings and guitars. Tickets are \$25 and include the dinner and performance. For reservations call (601) 318-6175.

4. Mississippi College's Mixed Company will perform with children from Clinton, Jackson, Madison and other nearby communities at the Holiday Dinner Showcase Nov. 20, 7 p.m. Tickets for the dinner and show are \$25 and can be purchased by calling the MC music office at (601) 925-3440. Reservations should be made by November 17. It is one of many musical events at MC in November and December. The Festival of Lights at Provine Chapel Dec. 3-5 will feature the MC Singers with performances set at 7:30 p.m. The concert has brightened the holiday season on the

Clinton campus for more than two decades. Tickets cost \$10.

5. In the last five weeks more than 400 students have applied to the new William Carey University College of Osteopathic Medicine (WCU-COM) which will begin classes in the fall of 2010, and more applications are coming in every day. Construction continues on the new COM buildings on the Hattiesburg campus. Carey's College of Osteopathic Medicine is the 26th in the nation. One hundred students will be chosen from the total number of applicants to begin classes in the fall of 2010. All students apply through the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service (AACOMAS) at [aacomas.aacom.org](http://aacomas.aacom.org). The student's initial application is referred to as a primary. Students wishing to apply to WCU-COM must pay a fee and specify WCU-COM. When the primary application is complete, usually between 6 to 8 weeks, it is then downloaded to the WCU-COM and a secondary application is emailed to the student. Once the secondary application is complete, the file is reviewed and letters to the most qualified students are sent out inviting them to interview. Interviews will begin in December and continue until the inaugural class of 100 is filled. Prospective students can call Sandra Meeler or Emily Bennett at (601) 318-6235 or visit the website at [www.wmcarey.edu](http://www.wmcarey.edu) for more information.

6. Pre-registration for spring 2010 classes at Blue Mountain College will continue through Dec. 21. Shelia Freeman, BMC registrar, said students who have been accepted for enrollment for the spring semester could begin the registration process immediately. Prospective students should contact the BMC admissions office at (662) 685-4771 extension 166, or send an email to [admissions@bmc.edu](mailto:admissions@bmc.edu).

7. The Lucile Parker Art Gallery will feature the exhibit "Collective Creativity - An exhibit by Cameraderie Photography Club" November 30 through December 17 at

William Carey University. The opening reception will be Dec. 3 at 7 p.m. Christmas Vespers and Hanging of the Green is scheduled from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m. The exhibit features the works of 16 photographers in a variety of styles including landscapes, abstracts, and realism. The public is invited to the exhibit and reception admission free. The gallery is open Monday through Friday from 1 p.m. through 4 p.m. and by appointment. For more information about the exhibit call (601) 318-6528.

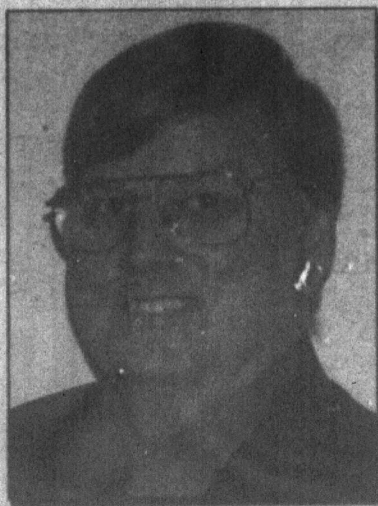
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## STAFF CHANGES

1. Willow Pointe Church, Hattiesburg, has called Jimmy Miller as Worship/Associate pastor effective Oct. 1.
2. Mt. Zion Church, Waynesboro, has called Wayne Walley as pastor effective Nov. 1. Shown are Walley and his wife, Sandy.
3. Moselle Memorial Church, Jones Association, has called Kayla Stevens as children's ministry director. She is a senior at William Carey University.



2. Armstrong



2. Morris



2. The Walleys



3. Stevens

# THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

P.O. Box 27

Clinton, MS 39060-0027

(601) 922-2242

www.baptistchildrensvillage.com

## GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor with love and respect those who are truly paying tribute to the world around them.

OCTOBER 8 - 31, 2009

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Bill & Anna Jo Thomas  
Clarence & Warren Triplett  
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Center Ridge BC-Yazoo City

Virginia Cox  
Tom, Rich & Mary Bell Teasley  
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Mrs. Peggy Shuckrow  
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Isabella Dearman Kruse  
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Kathy Martin  
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Gwen Walker, BCV Administrator of Reedy Acres Campus in Water Valley, and Bill Tate, BCV Administrator of Farrow Manor Campus in Coldwater, load trunks that church groups and individuals from across the state helped purchase this summer to be used as Christmas gifts.



Jennifer Hooks, Mississippi College student and Baptist Student Union leader, brought a team with her to visit with the residents of the Robinson Emergency Care cottage. They brought snacks for the children, played games, and shared the gospel with the children through the salvation bracelet craft.



A team from Union Baptist Church in Raleigh led by Rev. & Mrs. David Hays are pictured with Robinson Emergency Care Houseparents Jerry & Patsy Gilmore. The group hosted a devotion, hosted a picnic and played games with the residents.

## Thanksgiving & Christmas Food Needs

- Hams (We have enough turkeys)
- Canned Vegetables (corn, green beans, peas, etc.)
- Cranberry Sauce
- Stuffing
- Frozen pies or pie crusts
- Chocolate, Butterscotch & Peanut Butter Chips
- Cornbread & muffin mixes
- Tea bags
- Kool-Aid
- Sugar

## Christmas Project Ideas

\$25 Gift Cards to Walmart, Belk and Game Stop  
\$5 and \$10 Gift Cards to Restaurants, Dollar General & Fred's  
Movie Passes and Movie Rental Gift Certificates  
Duffel Bags for teenagers  
Contemporary Christian CDs  
Batteries (AA, AAA, 9V, and C)

Scrapbooking supplies  
Disposable cameras  
Lip gloss and lip balm  
Gum, candy and other non-perishable snacks  
Fragrant body wash, lotion and cologne  
Long-distance phone cards  
Wrapping  
Paper/Bows/Gift Bags/Tissue Paper

By Ken

By Ken

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## BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

### Watch Your Language

James 3:1-18

By Ken Anderson

Dr. Frank Luntz's popular book entitled *Words that Work* gives insights on how to find and use the right words to influence a person's business, employer, social, or political interests. Christians also influence others through their speech and deeds. Christians should understand "and accept the necessity to influence others toward God's love through their choice of words. This lesson will help believers not to underestimate the impact of their speech and conduct on others."

#### The Awesome Power of Words 3:1-6

Here James emphasized the need to control the tongue, and stated three analogies of the power of the tongue. He first focused on "masters" or "teachers" (Vs. 1). The early church like the church today was in need of gifted teachers. In the first century,

to teach was a prestigious position. James counseled his readers not to be motivated to teach for personal status. He was not writing to discourage those who should teach like he himself. Rather, one should weigh carefully the responsibility of teaching. The adage "practice what you preach" speaks of the integrity expected of the message spoken or taught. If the gift is misused, teachers will be held to a great degree of responsibility (judgment) by God.

In verse two, the word "offend" (KJV) is better translated "stumble" (HCSB). James reminded his readers of their daily imperfections through careless use of words. Even Moses and Paul stumbled with their speech. Read Psalm 106:33 and Acts 23:5. On the other hand the controlled tongue indicates near completeness or spiritual maturity resulting in the ability to control one's entire



Anderson

a forest. The source of this burning is hell itself. The tongue has an unbelievably wide range of power and is difficult to control.

#### The Dual Nature of Words

3:7-12

James reminded his audience that man could tame or discipline animal life. On the other hand man cannot tame his tongue. No one wants a deadly poison to be in their mouth. Neither should they want the tongue as a spiritual poison in their mouths either (Vs. 7-8).

James further his point on the influence of words with a strong appeal for consistency. People are inconsistent when the tongue is used to both curse and bless. To curse someone is to curse the similitude, likeness or image of God in that person, therefore

cursing God. This contradiction should not be. God created nature to be consistent. Bitter and sweet water will not come from the same source at the same time. Neither does fig trees produce olives and grapevines produce figs. A believer cannot curse another person and at the same time bless God. Read I John 4:20.

#### The Wise Use of Word

3:13-18

Next James connected the influence of words with wisdom. Words spoken are determined by the presence or lack of wisdom. Together the words "wisdom" and "understanding" describe a person who has knowledge of what is right and the ability to apply it in daily life, and to apply it in the right way (meekness) (Vs. 13). On the other hand, a believer cannot have this wisdom, while demonstrating bitter jealousy and self-ambition. This behavior erases any testimony of wisdom (Vs. 14). This earthly wisdom is not from God (Vs. 15), and results in confusion and "every vile practice" (RSV), (Vs. 16).

The characteristics of God's wisdom are "peace," "gentle-

ness" or "respect," "open to reason," "mercy" or "compassion," "good fruits," "without partiality," and "without hypocrisy" or straight-forward and honest. These seeds when sown produce a harvest of peace (Vs. 17-18).

#### Insights:

"... make it pass, before you speak, three gates of gold: These narrow gates. First, Is it true? Then, is it needed? ... And the next is last and narrowest, is it kind? And if to reach your lips at last it passes through these gateways then you may tell the tale, nor fear what the result of speech may be" - Beth Day, 1885.

"Paul lists 'outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions' right along with 'immorality, drunkenness, and carousings' as 'works of the flesh.' Yet, persons who cause dissensions and disputes with their tongues are much more likely to remain in good standing in their churches than those who engage in drunkenness and carousing." (Lucien Coleman, *Controlling the Tongue*, June 10, 1990).

Anderson is Transitional Pastor, Tremont First Baptist Church, Tremont.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Give Thanks

Psalm 116

By Ginger M. Caughman

Our American holiday of Thanksgiving is a pleasurable institution. What traditions do you enjoy? Family gatherings. Food: Turkey and dressing; cranberry sauce; green-bean casserole; hot buttered rolls; pecan, pumpkin and mince pies. Televised New York parade. Football. All of these blessings are part of the freedoms Americans enjoy.

Notice in our commercial-oriented world, how many Thanksgiving holiday decorations simply read, Give Thanks! But give thanks to whom?

In the beginning of our country, people thanked God for His protection and blessings. Officially, we have celebrated the holiday we call Thanksgiving since 1789 when George Washington issued the first presidential proclamation calling the nation to set aside a

day of public thanksgiving and prayer to God, "that we may all unite in rendering to Him our sincere and humble thanks."

Christians know and rejoice that we can give thanks to God for our blessings in Christ Jesus our Lord. How do you express your thanks to God? This week's Psalm suggests four ways:

#### 1. Pray to God, vv. 1-4

God always hears our prayers. The Psalmist expresses his gratitude for this stunning fact. God loves each person in the world; past, present, and future. God loves us individually. Read the next sentence out loud: God loves me. "I love the Lord because He hears my voice and my supplications. He has inclined His ear to me" (vv. 1-2). The Psalmist thanks God for relating to him in a personal way (vv. 3-4). He pours out his



Caughman

heart to God. Prayer is simply talking with God.

#### 2. Rest in God, vv. 5-8

The Lord is gracious, righteous, compassionate, and merciful. When I have been humbled, He saved and rescued me (v.v. 5-6). God is my Divine Helper, my spiritual rest. God speaks to my heart: "Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you" (v. 7). God has blessed us through the valley of death, dried our tears and directed our paths. Rest in God's goodness and grace (v. 8).

#### 3. Walk with God vv. 9-11

The Psalmist decides to walk in obedience to God for His abundant blessings. Have you surrendered your life to God? Look at the hymn, "I Surrender All," and ponder the words.

#### 4. Worship God vv. 12-19

In this Psalm comes the verse (you may want to underline in your Bible) reminding us to worship God in all circumstances! "To Thee O Lord, I shall

offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon Your name" (v. 17). Worship God at all times giving Him the sacrifice of thanksgiving! We still have abundant blessings this Thanksgiving. How will you give thanks this season? Worship the Lord!

Out of 150 Psalms, in three-months we have studied only a few. Look at the next; Psalm 117 is the shortest and the middle chapter of the Bible. The actual middle verse of the Bible, I'm told is, "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man" (Psalm 118:8 NASB). Wise counsel!

Perhaps you will choose a Psalm to read over your Thanksgiving-day table. Consider these: "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love and mercy endure forever. The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Give thanks to the Lord; He is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting." (Psalm 118: 1, 14, 24, 29). Then sing a hymn of praise to God. My Daddy liked

to sing the "Doxology" when the family gathered. Be reading Psalm 119 before next week. There are 176 verses in the Bible's longest chapter.

Henry Halley tells us the Hallel or Praise Psalms (113-118) were sung by families at Passover. Psalm 118 was Jesus' farewell hymn with the disciples at the Last Supper as He left the Passover on His way to Gethsemane and Calvary (Matthew 26:30).

Praise God for Jesus, the chief corner stone of our faith! "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes!" Ps. 118: 22-23). How marvelous indeed! Jesus our Savior! Happy Thanksgiving!

**PRAYER:** Lord God, we worship You, praise and thank You for your abundant blessings. Father, forgive our individual sin of turning away from You. Forgive our corporate sins and heal our land by Your grace and mercy. We give You thanks for Jesus, the Christ of God! Amen.

Caughman teaches the Bible and sings in two choirs at First Church, Magee.

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.



Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

# Russian legislation aims to limit missionary activities

MOSCOW (BP) — New legislation being considered by Russian lawmakers could drastically restrict missions activity if made into law. Restrictions could include requiring missionaries and Russian Christians to obtain permission to engage in missionary activity and limiting its locations and participants, such as tourists and minors.

While the proposals are currently in the draft stages, language introduced by the Russian Ministry of Justice October 12 indicates that if these laws are enacted they will greatly restrict religious freedom.

Russian Baptist officials say they believe the new language primarily targets Roman Catholics and Protestants and believe it has already found favor with leaders of Russian Orthodox, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism — Russia's four most prominent religions.

"Of course, when measures like this are talked about, we are always concerned and we should look at them with a measure of seriousness," said Ed Tarleton, a leader of work in Russia for the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. "Evangelicals have enjoyed days of openness and freedom, so when lawmakers start talking about language that is contrary to that, we become concerned."

The proposed changes include allowing only religious groups who have been registered in Russia for at least 15 years to apply for permission to

engage in missionary activity. Foreigners in Russia on a temporary visa, such as a tourist visa, would be excluded from engaging in missionary work.

Russian Baptist leaders say that wording in the proposed legislation makes no distinction between professional missionaries, toward whom the legislation is aimed, and average believers. "Practically all believers will become susceptible to penal sanction," says Yuri Sipko, president of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists.

In addition, the new language indicates that missions activity will not be allowed in hospitals, orphanages, or homes for invalids and the aging without the approval of government officials. Missionary activity would also be prohibited on the grounds of government buildings.

The proposed measures also take aim at minors, saying that Russian minors may not be present at religious activities or be given media materials without their parents' consent.

Over the past decade, Baptists in Russia as well as other Protestants have been involved with social work, addressing the issues of drug and alcohol abuse. Sipko recently wrote, "Without missionary activities, drunkenness and the abuse of narcotics will only increase. If the state begins to destroy the social ministry of churches, it will be forced to build more prisons."

IMB missionary Andy Leiniger has been working

with Russian Baptists in Siberia as they develop social ministry programs. "If these laws were to pass and be enforced, they would officially shut them [the ministry centers] down," Leiniger said, "but I think it would be very hard to unofficially stop the work that is being done when it comes to helping people get away from their addictions."

Baptist leaders are most concerned about the ambiguity of the language in the proposals. "Right now, it is like we are driving down the road and have speed limit and stop signs to tell us what we can and cannot do and police to enforce those specific rules," Tarleton said. "If these new proposals remain as ambiguous as they appear to be at this stage, it would be like changing everything to caution signs, and religious groups would constantly be evaluated by officials making judgment calls based on their interpretation of the new laws."

Tarleton and Russian Baptist leaders have urged the worldwide religious community to join them in prayer as Russian lawmakers consider the proposals, praying that language restricting missionary activity in Russia be excluded from new legislation, for Russian Baptist churches and leaders as they work with government officials, and for IMB missionaries serving in Russia as they continue to minister in uncertain times.



WITNESSING — Baptist Valodya Kuznetsov explains passages from the New Testament during a home meeting near Izhevsk, Russia. Russian Baptist leaders say that wording in proposed Russian legislation to restrict missionary activity makes no distinction between professional missionaries and average believers. "Practically all believers will become susceptible to penal sanction," says Yuri Sipko, president of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians. (BP photo)

## Southern Baptist aid gratefully received by Indonesia victims



BIG TASK — An Indonesian boy does his best to help haul debris from his village in Western Sumatra after the destruction of a 7.6 magnitude earthquake in September. (BP photo)

WEST SUMATRA, Indonesia (BP) — "And so, this is what He is up to on our island... taking a tragedy and opening up a door for seeds to be planted," a Christian worker in Indonesia wrote following the magnitude 7.6 earthquake on September 30.

The worker, along with a

team of 23 national believers and U.S. volunteers, took supplies to a remote village of nearly 3,500 people in Western Sumatra. The team held medical clinics and distributed tents, blankets, food and water.

The eight-person U.S. team was led by Doug and Jenny Anderson (not their real

names), members of TrueNorth Church in North Augusta, S.C., and encompassed partnerships with churches in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia as well as the Christian Medical and Dental Association.

The team originally had planned to hold medical clinics in another area. However, when the earthquake hit two days before they left the United States, they were asked to work in the earthquake region instead.

"We had talked about that possibility at our last team meeting," Doug Anderson said, "so it was an easy decision to make the change."

Getting supplies for the trip with two days' notice could have been tricky since they usually purchase supplies once on site, but through some previously scheduled meetings and a few phone

calls the team received 19 bags of donated supplies for the trip. Then the airline waived the fees associated with extra baggage.

When they arrived in Indonesia, the volunteers were surprised by the friendly reception from villagers. Community leaders opened the mosque for their use. By day, a green curtain separated the back area where the team held its clinics from the area reserved for prayer. By night, the women slept on the terrace of the mosque while the men slept in tents in the courtyard.

Although the village had been a difficult area for Christian workers, the team was amazed by the openness of the people. Villagers repeatedly voiced their gratitude, and a village leader noted this was the first team to provide substantial help since the earthquake. "It was obvious that they were hurting and wanting to talk about what they had experienced," the Christian worker in Indonesia wrote.

As a result, while the doctors and nurses met medical needs, others in the group worked with the children, singing songs, providing basic hygiene information, and giv-

ing them a chance to draw pictures about their experiences.

Team members also had the opportunity to pray with each person who visited the clinic. "An amazing thing happened with a number of patients," Jenny Anderson said. "They actually joined in by voicing their own prayers along with us."

Then at a closing ceremony held in the team's honor, the leader of the mosque directed those present to "pray according to your own culture," she recounted.

"I never imagined sitting in a mosque with both Christians and Muslims praying together," Jenny Anderson said.

This openness has paved the way for future teams to continue the work begun by the volunteers. A group of national believers who came in after the U.S. volunteers left hopes to continue building relationships and meeting needs in the name of Jesus.

"Since I have been hearing about this people group for a few years now, I am so thankful for the chance to walk among them," the Christian worker wrote. "Their faces are etched on our hearts... We can now lift up their actual names to the throne!"